

# **MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

## **MAY 18, 2009**

### **MINUTES – Meeting in Newton City Hall – Cafeteria**

**PRESENT:** Jane Brown, Rob Caruso (Co-Chair), Lucie Chansky, Jini Fairley, Jeff Hutter, Barbara Lischinsky, Girard Plante (Co-Chair), Heather Platt, Jason Rosenberg  
**REGRETS:** Rosemary Larking  
**STAFF:** Beverly Droz (Human & Vol. Services) Kathleen Cahill (Planning & Dev.)  
**GUESTS:** Peter Barrer, Sandra Lingley, Frank Nichols

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The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm and chaired by Rob Caruso.

Introductions were made and guests were welcomed.

### **MINUTES**

A **motion** was made to accept the minutes from the April 22 meeting and the motion passed unanimously.

### **CONSOLIDATION PLAN – Kathleen Cahill**

The Consolidated Plan is a five-year plan that establishes priorities for the expenditure of CDBG funds. We're going through the process that will cover FY11-FY15. Access needs are evaluated and priorities are established based on these needs. At the April meeting we reviewed the access needs presented by the Parks & Recreation Department.

### **Presentation from the Department of Public Works**

We first welcomed Frank Nichols, Project Engineer from the Engineering Division of the Department of Public Works. A list of specific non-compliant intersections locations in West Newton, Newtonville and Nonantum was previously emailed to MCPD members. Most all ramps at these curb cuts have similar problems of being either an excessive ramp slope and/or having no flat area at the top of the ramp. This comprehensive list specified the percentage of slope and if there was no flat area available.

Frank said that the curb cuts along Watertown Street in the Nonantum Village pose the most significant challenge because the entry ways into many businesses are located close to them. To have the appropriate room for the ramp and flat area at the top may mean cutting into the entry way of the storefront. The City might need to obtain a "right of entry".

- Frank was asked about Newton Centre and said while it is not on this list he noticed several ramps at the MBTA stop and along Herrick Rd that need attention.
- Frank suggested that if we provided a list of prioritized curb cuts to DPW ahead of time, CDBG funds could be used to complete curb cuts before DPW does its road work
- Kathleen asked if the Committee still considers curb cuts as significant for funding and the Committee unanimously agreed.
- Barbara asked if Audible Pedestrian Signals could be done at the same time as the curb cuts and also if Frank was going to survey other villages.

- Frank said yes to both. He's going to review the list he provided us and prioritize the curb cuts.

The Committee thanked Frank for his presentation and information.

### **Other Issues and Citizens Comments**

Kathleen reported that she had heard from several residents.

- Linda Morrison brought up the issues of signage, particularly the need for larger signs so people visiting City Hall and the Education Center could more easily find departments. For the Library, many of the shelves have labels that are tiny and worn-off and the library map is very small.
- Joanne Mead has a daughter in a wheelchair and requested curb cuts in Newton Centre. She felt we should focus access needs in village centers and also at housing locations for seniors and the disabled.

Kathleen asked about **signage** concerns from the Committee members.

- Barbara said the Library doesn't have enough tactile signage and signage is needed at the Newton Housing Authority.
- Lucie said there is little signage at the Education Center.
- Jini said City Hall has a fair amount of Braille signage.
- Overall members agreed that better signage is needed for hallways and directories are needed at each City Hall entrance door.

Kathleen has not heard from the School Department yet.

Kathleen and Bev discussed the ramp at the Health Center in Newton Centre as a possible consideration for access funding if there was enough funding available.

### **Presentation from the Newton Community Farm (non-profit)**

[www.newtoncommunityfarm.org](http://www.newtoncommunityfarm.org)

MCPD welcomed Peter Barrer, the volunteer Board President of NCF. Peter gave a little overview of the farm and presented the accessibility needs for the next five years.

The City bought Angino Farm with CPA (Community Preservation Act funds). It is a 2 acre farm at the corner of Winchester and Nahanton Streets. A farmer was hired and he lives in the farm house, which is very old and it is not feasible to make it accessible. He and the NCF Board, and many volunteers make the farm a success. In addition to fees charged for classes, residents buy shares which helps make the farm financially self-supporting and the farm donates 10% of their produce to the Newton Food Pantry. Their farm stand is on Winchester Street. Accessibility has always been part of this non-profit's plans.

They want chair-height raised cedar beds in the Learning Garden to enable people in wheelchairs to participate in planting, weeding and harvesting. The estimated material cost is \$1,500. The labor to construct it will be donated.

Access to the main barn level needs re-grading and repaving to enable wheelchair access. The estimated installation cost is \$14,000.

The lower level of the barn is open for activities and classes. But to convert the main barn floor to a useable accessible community area, they would need \$30,000 to do the following:

1. Rebuild the floor to become level (estimate \$10,000)
2. Install two accessible toilet rooms (estimate \$2,000)
3. Lift the mezzanine workshop space (estimate \$18,000)

Peter noted that currently NCF has to change the location of a class if someone has access needs in order to attend, and he has been in touch with Beverly about these issues.

The Committee thanked Peter for his presentation and information.

Kathleen gave a brief overview that she does the CDBG report each month and we have a little bit of additional funds this year. The beds could be presented at an upcoming meeting. They are a separate funding issue from the rest of the project. Jason noted there are a few such beds behind the Memorial Spaulding School.

### **MCPD – Committee vs. Commission**

Bev explained the situation to date. It is up to the Mayor to docket an item before the Board of Aldermen for MCPD to become a Disabilities Commission. She and her boss, Commissioner Naparstek had met with Sandy Pooler back in February. Pooler had several questions and he was interested in some fact finding about how other communities collect and distribute the HP parking fines. Bev played telephone tag with the Waltham Commission but she apologized that she was swamped during this whole time period coordinating NewtonSERVES and hadn't made progress. Jini offered to research how Watertown does it and Heather said she would follow up with Waltham. Bev asked them to report back to her and she would share the information accordingly.

### **CDBG ACCESS PROJECTS REPORT**

This report was submitted to MCPD by email before this meeting for their review. Per usual it is copied here within the minutes. Kathleen Cahill presented the report. Comments are noted after each project.

**Accessible Pedestrian Signals** (Project CD0703C. Expended, \$7,818; Budget balance: \$11,995). The installation of APS-10 audible pedestrian signals at the intersections of Walnut and Cabot and Beacon and Chestnut, Commonwealth Avenue by St. Ignatius and Beacon and Hammond St. near McElroy Commons was completed in November. Centre St. and Centre Ave. is a priority intersection; however that is on-hold until pending a final decision by the Newton Corner Advisory Committee on VHB conceptual plans. Washington St. and Commonwealth Ave. is another priority intersection. A list of improvements funded with traffic mitigation funds have not be released. Other priority locations submitted to traffic engineering include: Washington and Beacon as well as Washington Street by Newton-Wellesley Hospital. The City's contract with Republic ITS is currently expired and awaiting renewal.

*Kathleen noted that the City does not have a vendor to install APS and we are waiting on the Purchasing Department to move it forward. She'll ask Clint about Washington St. and Commonwealth Ave. Maybe we should have someone from DPW come to a Committee meeting to explain the design.*

**Charlesbank Playground** (Project CD0903C. Budget balance, \$30,000). Project includes the installation of a ramped concrete walkway with metal handrails, designed to complement new play equipment, benches, and picnic tables and allow access through the park.

*Kathleen noted that there is a mixture of marathon funds, access funds and neighborhood improvement funds. There has not been progress due to allocation of funds to other projects.*

**Curb Cuts** (Project CD0903G, Expended \$48,879 Budget balance, \$42,255). Funds were used to complete the following curb cuts: Auburn and Washington (4/widening of island) Mason-Rice (6), Temple and Myrtle (2), JFK Circle (2). Committee earmarked remaining funds for curb cuts on Everett and Gibbs and Sumner and Gibbs in Newton Centre. Construction on these curb cuts will begin this spring.

*Kathleen noted that since Gibbs and Sumner involved some land taking, a group of residents got involved, wanting a raised walkway. Engineering is working on designs for it as well as our other ones.*

**Retrofitting Curb Cuts** (Project CD0903E, Budget balance, \$6,000). A list of 7 locations (Homer Street, Beacon St. @ Dalton, Centre Green @ Langley, 1188 Centre Green, 82 Lincoln Street, 100 Walnut Street, 28 Commonwealth St) (19 curb cuts) have been identified by committee members and staff. Project 100%; awaiting labor and material bills.

*Kathleen noted that many needed to be re-done due to molded form and color. DPW had to go back and do them. DPW and Engineering differ on what material is better to use, plastic or fiberglass. There's concern about how the fiberglass ones will survive the winter and plowing.*

**Cold Spring Accessible Route** (CD10-03A, Budget balance: \$36,000) Project includes accessible "L shaped" pathway from parking area to circle where the farmer's market is held.

**Crystal Lake Accessible Pathway** (CD10-03B, Budget balance: \$9,000) Project includes funds for material costs associated with the construction of an accessible pathway along City's property easement on 230 Lake Avenue.

*Kathleen noted that this project will start soon.*

**Accessible Curb Cuts** (CD10-03C, Budget balance: \$80,000). Project includes the reconstruction and construction of ADA compliant curb cuts.

*Kathleen noted that with \$80k, we may have some left over funds. This may be where we can utilize some funds for the Hyde Community Center raised beds.*

**Audible Pedestrian Signals** (CD10-03D, Budget balance: \$6,000). Project includes the installation of accessible pedestrian signals.

### **CBGD stimulus funds**

Kathleen talked to Rob and Girard before this meeting. The Planning and Development Board will hold a public hearing for the proposed CDBG-R projects on June 1. One or both of them will attend. They will make a simple statement of support for the access projects on behalf of the MCPD.

### **MCPD - June meeting**

At our June 15 meeting we will wrap up and establish priority needs. Kathleen may bring forth needs from the schools and the election polls if she hears from them.

## **OTHER BUSINESS:**

### **MCPD - Meeting dates:**

The Committee had requested that we start meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month if it is agreeable with the City's calendar. Beverly researched the availability of the cafeteria as well as holidays and other factors. Members decided on the following:

<b>Month</b>	<b>We were scheduled for:</b>	<b>Cafeteria is available? Other issues?</b>	<b>DECISION:</b>
July	Scheduled for 6/20	Bev is away July 13	<b>Mon, July 20</b>
August	Scheduled 8/17	Caf is available 8/10	<b>Mon, Aug. 10</b>
Sept.	Scheduled 9/21	Caf is available 9/14	<b>Mon. Sept. 14</b>
Oct.	Scheduled 10/19	City Hall closed 10/12	<b>Stay on 10/19</b>
Nov.	Scheduled 11/16. Wed 11/11 is Veteran's Day, Tues, 11/10 = HRC	Caf is available 11/9 but very difficult since 11/10 is HRC for Bev and Jane.	<b>Stay on 11/16</b>
Dec.	Scheduled 12/21	Caf is available 12/14	<b>Mon. Dec. 14</b>

Bev will submit these changed dates to the Buildings Department, and over the summer she will research the 2010 calendar.

### **HP Parking**

Beverly read the new brief HP application from Alderman Danberg on behalf of resident Rodney Barker to have a HP space opposite the HP ramp at the Newton Highlands Congregational Church. The HP space is to be place on Lincoln Street to improve handicapped access to the church. Following discussion, Jane made **a motion to support this HP space in Newton Highlands and it passed unanimously.**

Jason reminded the Committee about Ald. Lennon's request for a residential HP street space in front of 17 Murphy Court which was discussed at the April 22 meeting. Jason wrote an email to the Traffic Council starting our concerns as detailed in the 4/22/09 minutes, and a request that the Traffic Council not accept forms requesting such HP spaces unless the forms provide the needed information.

### **A motion passed to adjourn at 8:35 pm.**

**The next meeting will be on Monday, June 15 at 6:30pm.**

Respectfully submitted by Bev Droz